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NO. 344
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"MONSTER, MY SWEET!"
A FULL-LENGTH EPIC TALE!

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A 27-PAGE EPIC TALE OF THE BAT-MAN
"MONSTER, MY SWEET!"
THE PLACE: THE BATCAVE, UNDER THE WAYNE BUILDING IN MIDTOWN GOTHAM CITY!
THE TIME: NEAR DAWN, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS BEFORE ELECTION DAY, 1981!
I HEARD THE NEWS ON THE RADIO WHILE I MADE YOU BREAKFAST, SIR.
IS IT TRUE? DOES COUNCILMAN REEVES KNOW YOUR SECRET IDENTITY?
IF HE DOES, ALFRED, IT'S NOTHING SHORT OF CATASTROPHE!
GERRY CONWAY • WRITER
GENE COLAN • ARTIST
+ KLAUS JANSON • ARTIST
BEN ODA • LETTERER
ADRIENNE ROY • COLORIST
DICK GIORDANO • EDITOR

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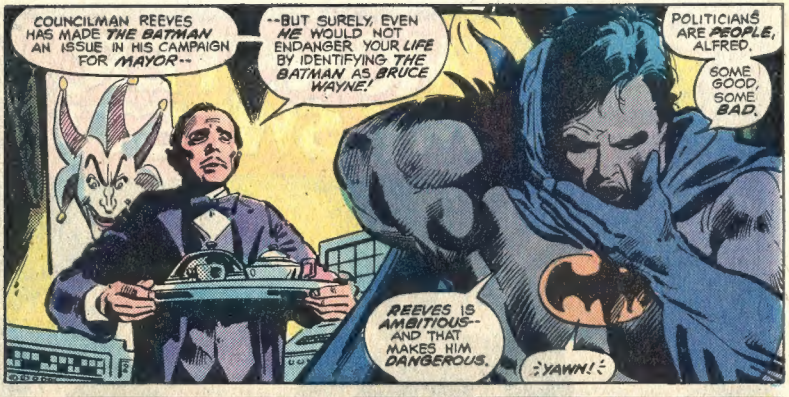
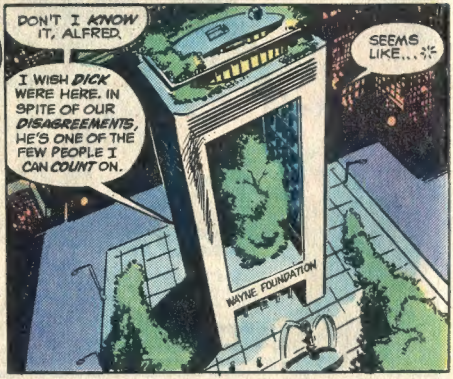
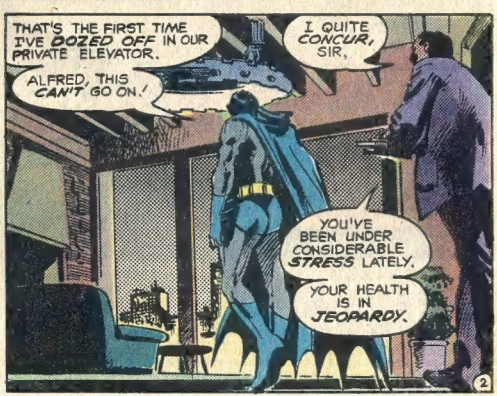

COUNCILMAN REEVES HAS MADE THE BATMAN AN ISSUE IN HIS CAMPAIGN FOR MAYOR--
--BUT SURELY, EVEN HE WOULD NOT ENDANGER YOUR LIFE BY IDENTIFYING THE BATMAN AS BRUCE WAYNE!
POLITICIANS ARE PEOPLE, ALFRED.
SOME GOOD, SOME BAD.
REEVES IS AMBITIOUS-- AND THAT MAKES HIM DANGEROUS.
:YAWN!:

SORRY.
I'VE BEEN UP ALL NIGHT, HELPING COMMISSIONER GORDON BOOK THE MAD HATTER FOR KIDNAPPING LUCIUS FOX.*
YOU NEED YOUR SLEEP, SIR.
*AS TOLD IN LAST MONTH'S DETECTIVE COMICS.-- DICK.


DON'T I KNOW IT, ALFRED.
I WISH DICK WERE HERE. IN SPITE OF OUR DISAGREEMENTS, HE'S ONE OF THE FEW PEOPLE I CAN COUNT ON.
SEEMS LIKE...
WAYNE FOUNDATION

SIR.
MASTER BRUCE.
WE'VE ARRIVED AT THE PENTHOUSE.
WHAT?


THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE DOZED OFF IN OUR PRIVATE ELEVATOR.
I QUITE CONCUR, SIR.
ALFRED, THIS CAN'T GO ON!
YOU'VE BEEN UNDER CONSIDERABLE STRESS LATELY.
YOUR HEALTH IS IN JEOPARDY.

AND NOT JUST MY HEALTH, OLD FRIEND.
POISON IVY IS THREATENING TO WIPE OUT THE WAYNE FOUNDATION--AND TODAY'S THE DAY OF RECKONING.
I WISH I COULD TALK TO YOU ABOUT IT--
--BUT A POST-HYPNOTIC SPELL PREVENTS ME FROM SAYING A WORD!
RIGHT NOW I FEEL LIKE THE LONELIEST MAN IN THE WORLD!
IN HIS MIND'S EYE, HE IMAGINES HER GLOATING, HER LIPS CURVED IN THAT EVIL YET SOMEHOW CHARMING GRIN...
HIS IMAGINATION IS NOT FAR FROM THE TRUTH, FOR AT THAT MOMENT, IN A ROOFTOP GREENHOUSE ACROSS TOWN...
WHAT'S THE IDEA, IVY?
HOWCUM YOU CALLED THIS MEETIN'--AND WHY WERE YOU SO SURE WE'D COME?
"BIG JACK" JOHNSON.
YOU'RE ONE OF GOTHAM'S MOST POWERFUL GANG BOSSES.
OR RATHER, YOU WERE.
AFTER TODAY, YOU'LL ANSWER TO A NEW "BOSS."
YOU'LL ANSWER TO ME.
HUH?
LADY, ALL THIS HUMIDITY--IT'S ROTTED YOUR BRAIN!
WHY SHOULD I ANSWER TO YOU?
BECAUSE MONEY TALKS IN THIS WORLD, BIG JACK.
AND BY NOON TODAY, POISON IVY WILL SPEAK WITH A VERY LOUD VOICE, INDEED!
NUTS!
3

IF YOU WEREN'T A DAME, I'D BREAK YOUR FACE FOR GETTIN' ME OUTTA BED.
LUCKY FOR YOU MY MA BROUGHT ME UP TO RESPECT WOMEN.
NEXT TIME YOU'RE DEAD.
"BIG JACK"...
SWI TT
YOU'VE MADE A BIG MISTAKE!
SAY, WHAT--?
WHI TT
A TWIST OF HER WRIST, A TUG BY SUPPLE MUSCLES--
--AND THE WOMAN CALLED POISON IVY SENDS "BIG JACK" JOHNSON CAREENING THROUGH TINTED HOTHOUSE GLASS.
CRASH!
"BIG JACK" IS TOO STARTLED EVEN TO YELL.
HIS BODYGUARD, HOWEVER, RESPONDS INSTANTLY.
SO DOES IVY.
KAWHAM
YOUR BOSS JUST RUINED A WHOLE TRAY OF SPECIAL HYBRIDS.
SIX MONTHS' WORK DOWN THE DRAIN.

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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...and win exciting electronic and photographic prizes.

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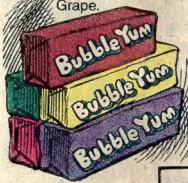

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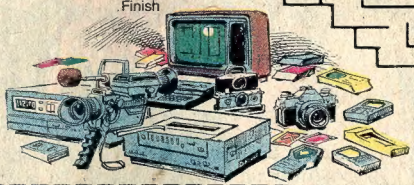

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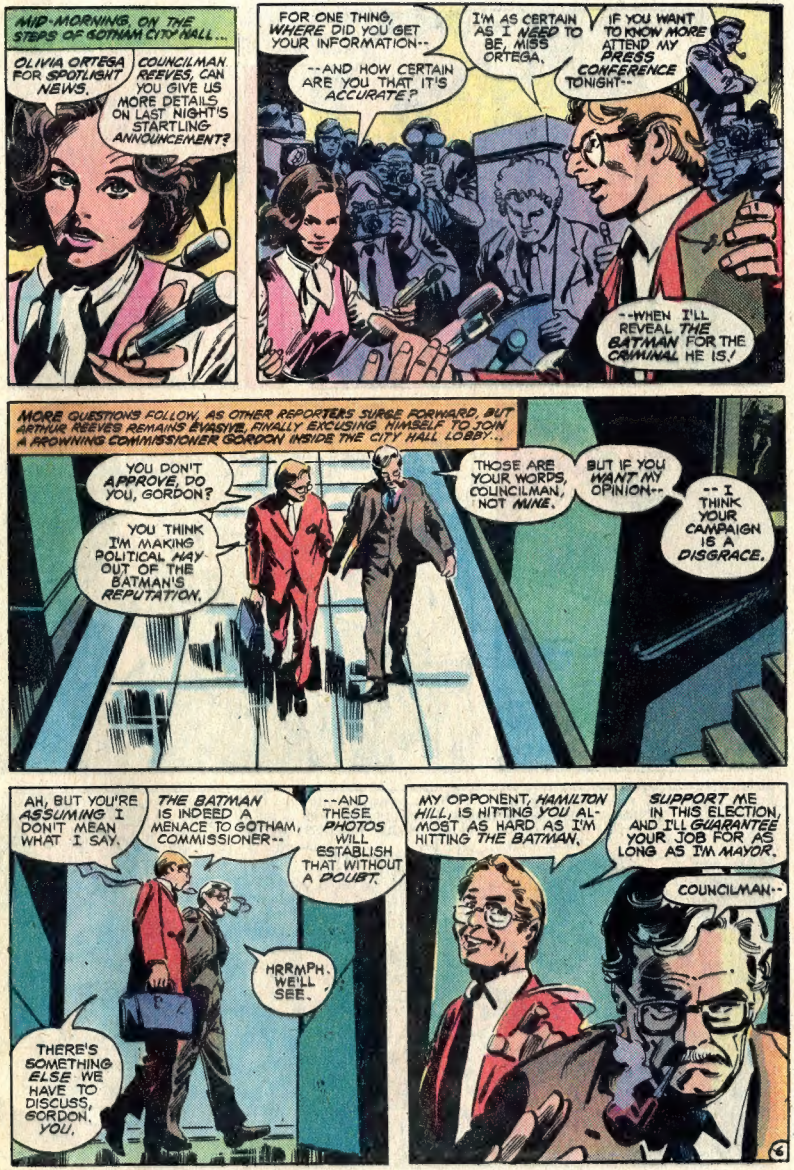
- ★ Second prize is a Mattel Intellivision with 4 cassettes. (10 Winners)
- ★ And, third prize is a set of 4 Mattel hand-held computer games. (100 Winners)

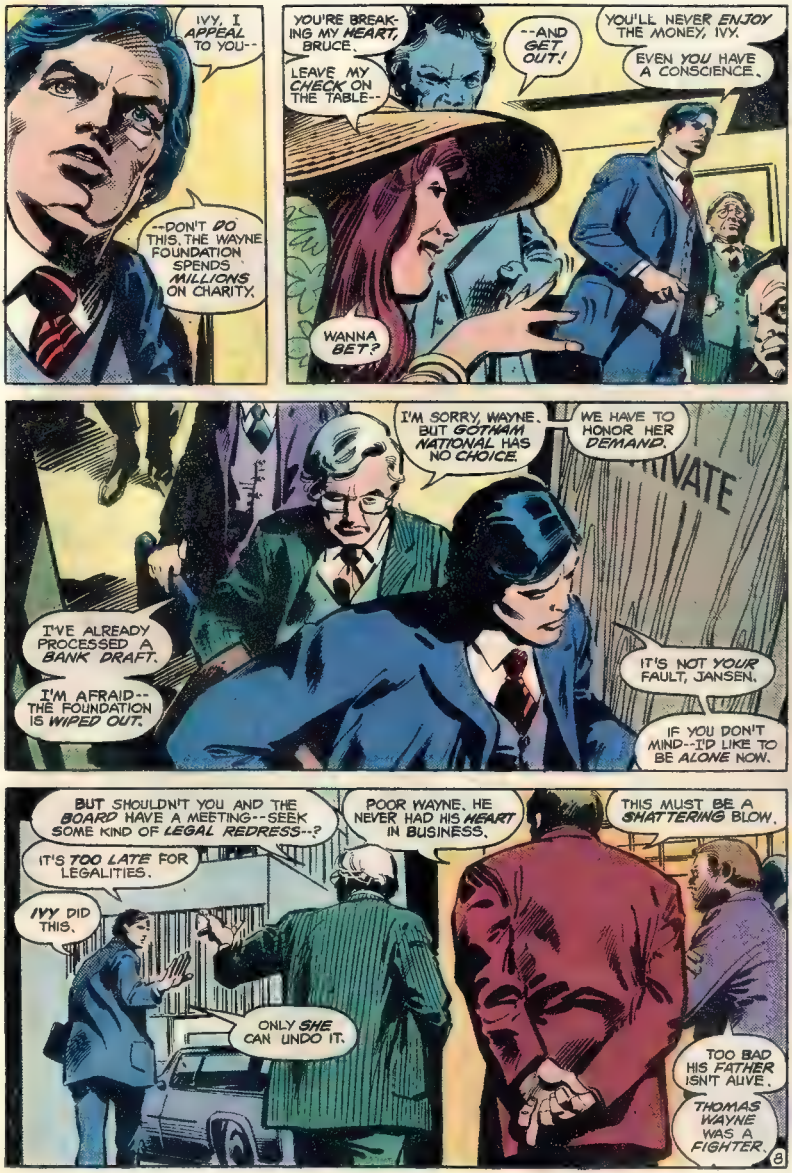
Mail entries to:
Bubble Yum Sweepstakes
P.O. Box 573
Lowell, IN 46356

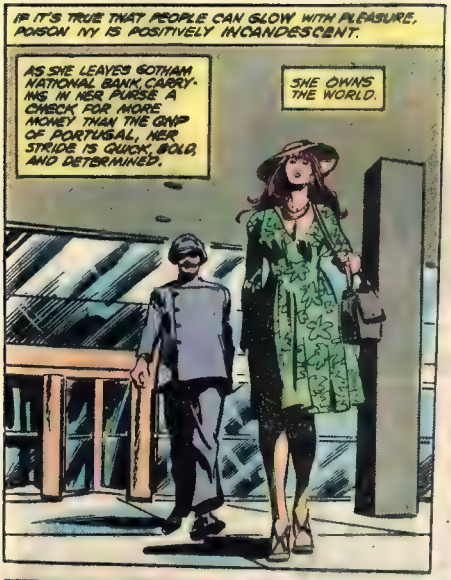
1. Correctly completing the maze is not necessary for entry.
2. No purchase necessary. To enter, print your name, address and zip code on the official entry blank or on a plain 3 x 5 piece of paper. Each entry must include two (2) outside wrappers from "Bubble Yum bubble gum" or print the words "Bubble Yum bubble gum" on a 3 x 5 piece of paper.
3. Enter as often as you like, but each entry must be mailed separately. Entries must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1981 and received by January 15, 1982.
4. Winners will be determined in a random drawing conducted by Ventura Associates, an independent judging organization whose decisions are final. Winners will be notified by mail. All prizes will be awarded. Odds of winning are dependent upon the number of entries received.
5. No duplicate prizes to a family and no substitutions. Winners may be required to sign a statement of eligibility and winners' names and likenesses may be used for promotion purposes. Liability for taxes is the sole responsibility of the prize winners.
6. Sweepstakes open to U.S. residents, except where prohibited by law. Not open to employees and their families of Life Savers, Inc., their affiliates, advertising, and judging agencies.
7. For a complete list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Bubble Yum Family Fun 'n' Games Winners List, P.O. Box 566 WL, Lowell, IN 46356

CHUNK!
I SHOULD BREAK HIS FACE FOR THAT, BUT LUCKY FOR HIM--
-- MY MOTHER BROUGHT ME UP TO RESPECT MEN!
PAKOW!
M-MR. JOHNSON, YOU NEVER TOLD ME THIS DAME WAS A KILLER!
YOU SNIVELIN' LITTLE WHIMP!
YOU'RE FINISHED WITH ME! LETTIN' A SKIRT TREAT US LIKE--
"BIG JACK," TRY NOT TO BE TOO STUPID.
YOU'RE PROBABLY PLANNING TO SEND A FEW THUGS AROUND--TO TEACH ME A LESSON.
DON'T.
WHAT I TOLD YOU STANDS.
I'M BOSS NOW. GET OUT!
WEREN'T YOU A LITTLE HARD ON 'EM, IVY?
BRICK-HEADS LIKE "BIG JACK" CAN'T ACCEPT CHANGE, IVOR, MY LOVE.
BLAST.
LOOK WHAT THE OAF DID TO MY DARLING PLANTS.
SPEAKING OF CHANGE...
GOTHAM GAZETTE
REEVES TO BATMAN: "I KNOW WHO YOU ARE-- AND I CAN PROVE IT!"
...TAKE A PEEK AT THIS...
ARTHUR REEVES
5

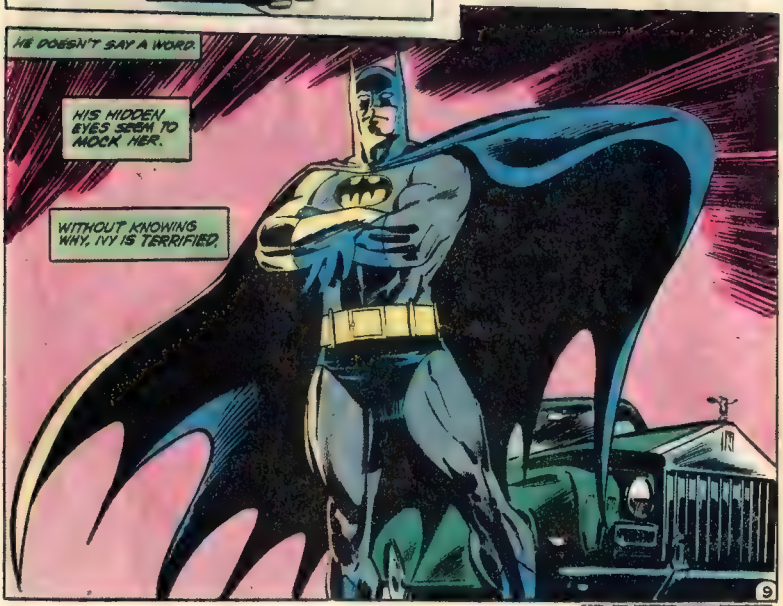

MID-MORNING, ON THE STEPS OF GOTHAM CITY HALL...
OLIVIA ORTEGA FOR SPOTLIGHT NEWS.
COUNCILMAN REEVES, CAN YOU GIVE US MORE DETAILS ON LAST NIGHT'S STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT?
FOR ONE THING, WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR INFORMATION--
--AND HOW CERTAIN ARE YOU THAT IT'S ACCURATE?
I'M AS CERTAIN AS I NEED TO BE, MISS ORTEGA.
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ATTEND MY PRESS CONFERENCE TONIGHT--
--WHEN I'LL REVEAL THE BATMAN FOR THE CRIMINAL HE IS!
MORE QUESTIONS FOLLOW, AS OTHER REPORTERS SURGE FORWARD, BUT ARTHUR REEVES REMAINS EVASIVE, FINALLY EXCUSING HIMSELF TO JOIN A FROWNING COMMISSIONER GORDON INSIDE THE CITY HALL LOBBY...
YOU DON'T APPROVE, DO YOU, GORDON?
YOU THINK I'M MAKING POLITICAL HAY OUT OF THE BATMAN'S REPUTATION.
THOSE ARE YOUR WORDS, COUNCILMAN, NOT MINE.
BUT IF YOU WANT MY OPINION--
-- I THINK YOUR CAMPAIGN IS A DISGRACE.
AH, BUT YOU'RE ASSUMING I DON'T MEAN WHAT I SAY.
THE BATMAN IS INDEED A MENACE TO GOTHAM, COMMISSIONER--
--AND THESE PHOTOS WILL ESTABLISH THAT WITHOUT A DOUBT.
HRRMPH. WE'LL SEE.
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE WE HAVE TO DISCUSS, GORDON. YOU.
MY OPPONENT, HAMILTON HILL, IS HITTING YOU ALMOST AS HARD AS I'M HITTING THE BATMAN.
SUPPORT ME IN THIS ELECTION, AND I'LL GUARANTEE YOUR JOB FOR AS LONG AS I'M MAYOR.
COUNCILMAN--
6

--STICK IT IN YOUR EAR.
GOTHAM NATIONAL BANK, 11:45 PM:
A CAMERA WHIRS AND CLICKS.
BRUCE WAYNE IS CAPTURED ON FILM HURRYING TO A MEETING OF WAYNE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS--
--AND AS THE CAMERA WHIRS AND CLICKS AGAIN, A CERTAIN REDHEAD GRINS--
CLICK!
YOU STILL TAKE A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE, BRUCE.
YOU AND THE BATMAN BOTH.
INSIDE...
AHEM. NOW THAT MR. WAYNE IS PRESENT, WE MAY PROCEED.
AS NOTED AT OUR LAST MEETING, THIS DOCUMENT--SIGNED BY THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BOARD--ASSIGNS ALL ASSETS OF THE FOUNDATION--TO MS. IVY.
AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.
IVY OBTAINED OUR SIGNATURES BY HYPNOSIS --BUT NONE OF US CAN ACCUSE HER--
--WITHOUT THE WORDS CHOKING IN OUR THROATS!
WE'VE BEEN OVER ALL THIS, JANSEN.
DO I GET THE MONEY, OR DON'T I?
7


IVY, I APPEAL TO YOU--
--DON'T DO THIS. THE WAYNE FOUNDATION SPENDS MILLIONS ON CHARITY.
YOU'RE BREAKING MY HEART, BRUCE.
LEAVE MY CHECK ON THE TABLE--
--AND GET OUT!
YOU'LL NEVER ENJOY THE MONEY, IVY.
EVEN YOU HAVE A CONSCIENCE.
WANNA BET?
I'M SORRY, WAYNE. BUT GOTHAM NATIONAL HAS NO CHOICE.
WE HAVE TO HONOR HER DEMAND.
I'VE ALREADY PROCESSED A BANK DRAFT.
I'M AFRAID--THE FOUNDATION IS WIPED OUT.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, JANSEN.
IF YOU DON'T MIND--I'D LIKE TO BE ALONE NOW.
BUT SHOULDN'T YOU AND THE BOARD HAVE A MEETING--SEEK SOME KIND OF LEGAL REDRESS--?
IT'S TOO LATE FOR LEGALITIES.
IVY DID THIS.
ONLY SHE CAN UNDO IT.
POOR WAYNE. HE NEVER HAD HIS HEART IN BUSINESS.
THIS MUST BE A SHATTERING BLOW.
TOO BAD HIS FATHER ISN'T ALIVE.
THOMAS WAYNE WAS A FIGHTER.


IF IT'S TRUE THAT PEOPLE CAN GLOW WITH PLEASURE, POISON IVY IS POSITIVELY INCANDESCENT.
AS SHE LEAVES GOTHAM NATIONAL BANK CARRYING IN HER PURSE A CHECK FOR MORE MONEY THAN THE GNP OF PORTUGAL, HER STRIDE IS QUICK, BOLD, AND DETERMINED.
SHE OWNS THE WORLD.

THEN AGAIN, MAYBE SHE'S ONLY RENTING IT...
LIKE A CLOUD ACROSS THE SUN, A SHADOW FALLS OVER HER... BRINGING WITH IT A CHILL, A COLD BREEZE LIKE BREATH FROM A GRAVE.
UNWILLINGLY, SHE FORCES HER GAZE UPWARD.



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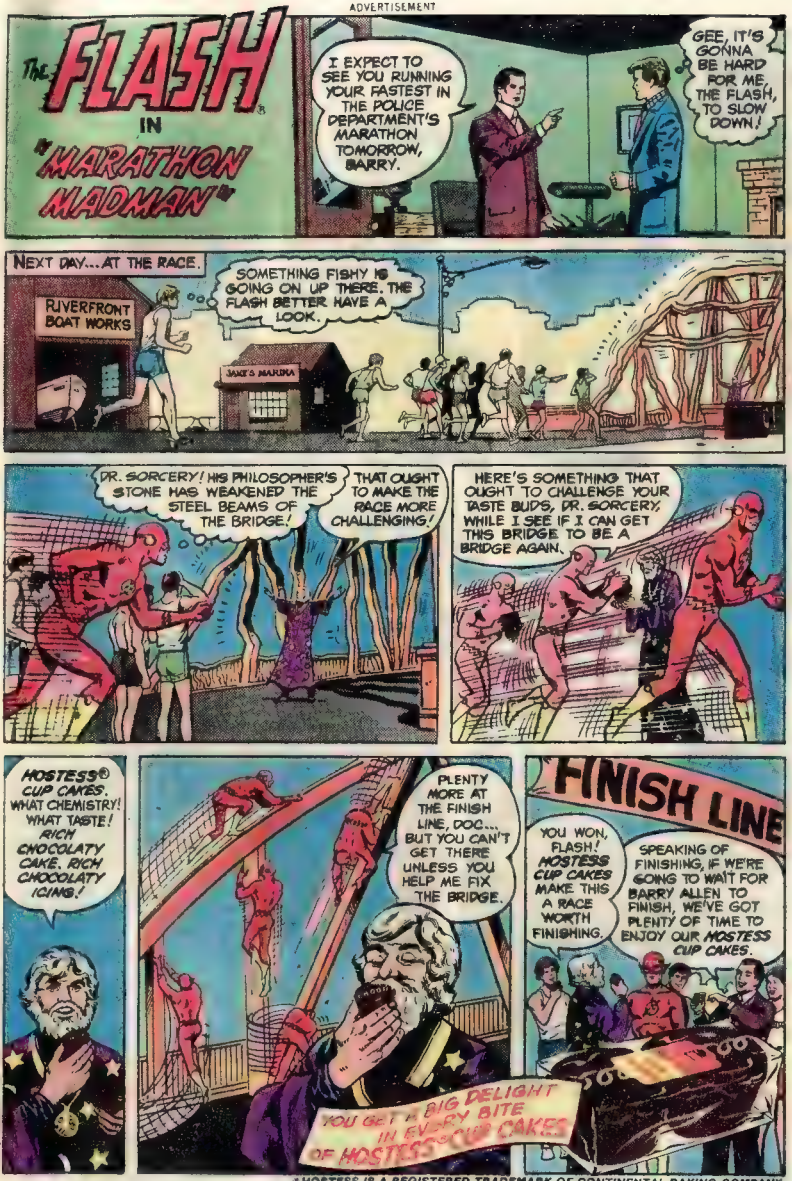
The FLASH
IN
"MARATHON MADMAN"
I EXPECT TO SEE YOU RUNNING YOUR FASTEST IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S MARATHON TOMORROW, BARRY.
GEE, IT'S GONNA BE HARD FOR ME, THE FLASH, TO SLOW DOWN!
NEXT DAY...AT THE RACE.
RIVERFRONT BOAT WORKS
SOMETHING FISHY IS GOING ON UP THERE. THE FLASH BETTER HAVE A LOOK.
JAKE'S MARINA
DR. SORCERY! HIS PHILOSOPHER'S STONE HAS WEAKENED THE STEEL BEAMS OF THE BRIDGE!
THAT OUGHT TO MAKE THE RACE MORE CHALLENGING!
HERE'S SOMETHING THAT OUGHT TO CHALLENGE YOUR TASTE BUDS, DR. SORCERY, WHILE I SEE IF I CAN GET THIS BRIDGE TO BE A BRIDGE AGAIN.
HOSTESS® CUP CAKES. WHAT CHEMISTRY! WHAT TASTE! RICH CHOCOLATY CAKE. RICH CHOCOLATY ICING!
PLENTY MORE AT THE FINISH LINE, DOC... BUT YOU CAN'T GET THERE UNLESS YOU HELP ME FIX THE BRIDGE.
FINISH LINE
YOU WON, FLASH! HOSTESS CUP CAKES MAKE THIS A RACE WORTH FINISHING.
SPEAKING OF FINISHING, IF WE'RE GOING TO WAIT FOR BARRY ALLEN TO FINISH, WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF TIME TO ENJOY OUR HOSTESS CUP CAKES.
YOU GET A BIG DELIGHT IN EVERY BITE OF HOSTESS CUP CAKES
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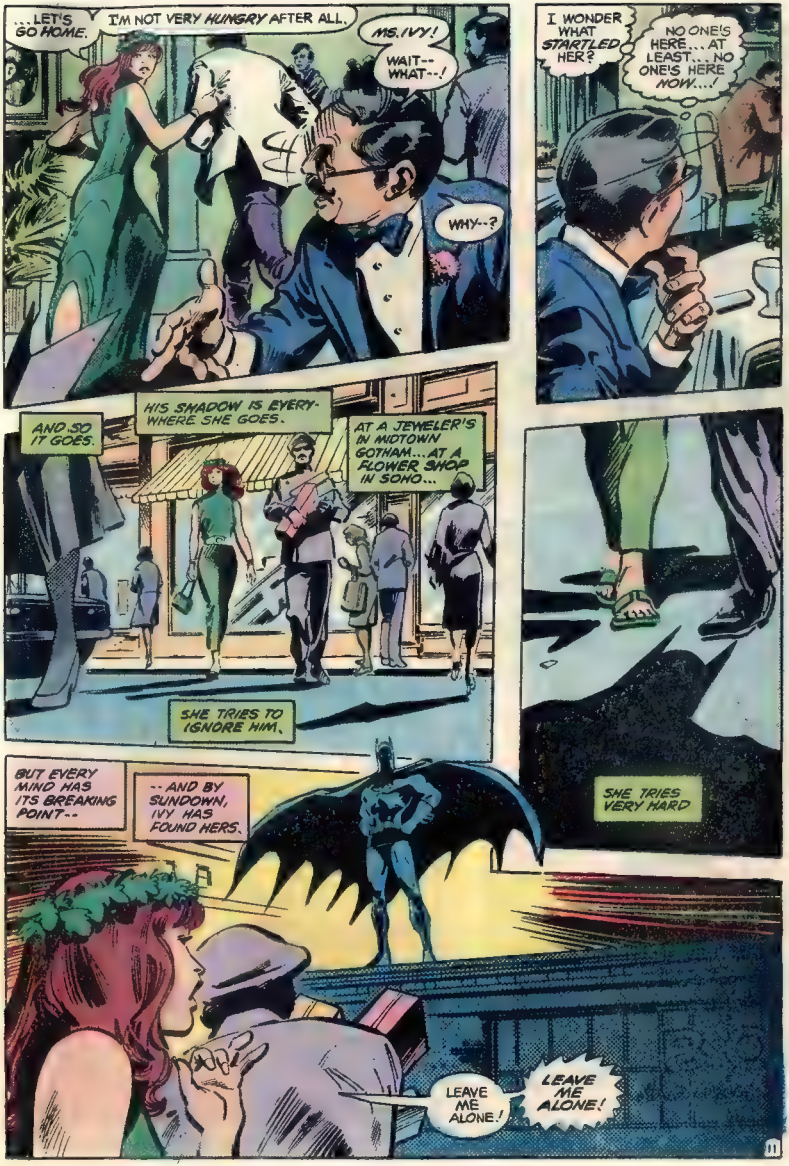
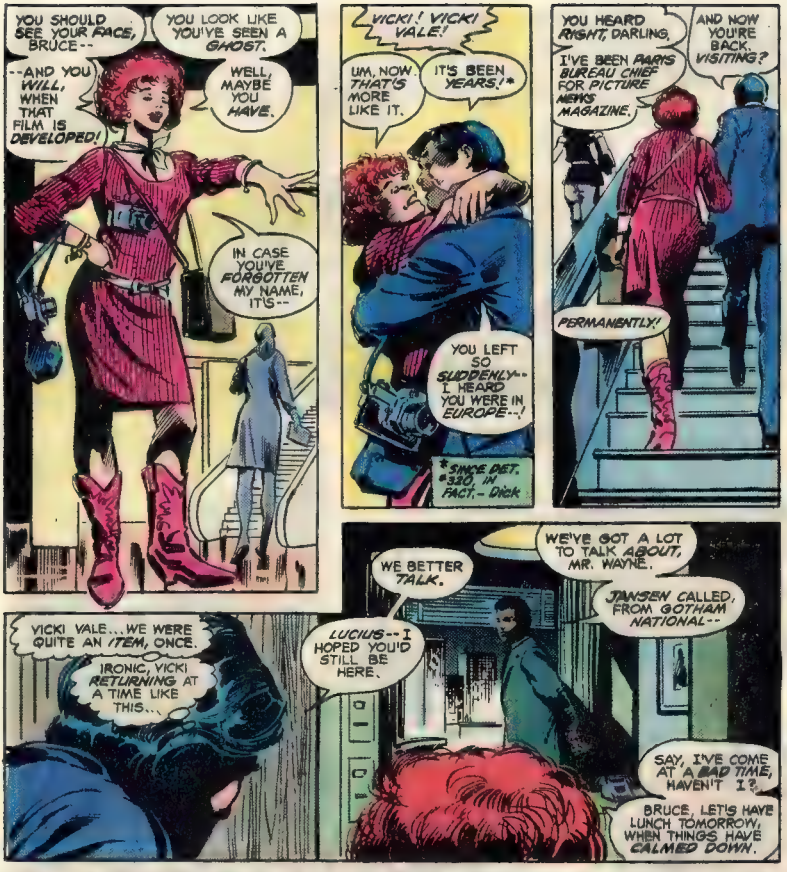
IVY RECOILS BRIEFLY, THE PLEASURE OF A MOMENT BEFORE... FORGOTTEN.
SHE STEPS AWAY, GLANCING BACK UNCERTAINLY--
--BUT WHEN THE BATMAN MAKES NO MOVE TO FOLLOW HER, SHE LAUGHS, AND WITH A SHAKE OF HER HEAD, STEPS INTO HER WAITING CAR.
AND NOW, THE BATMAN SMILES...
LE BISTRO, ONE OF GOTHAM'S MORE EXCLUSIVE RESTAURANTS. ONE HOUR LATER..
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOT INTO ME, IVOR.
WHY SHOULD I LET THE BATMAN RUIN THE HAPPIEST DAY OF MY LIFE?
LET'S FORGET HIM, FORGET EVERYTHING--
SHE DOESN'T ASK HOW HE FOUND HER; THE THOUGHT NEVER ENTERS HER MIND.
-- EVERYTHING--?
YOU!
FOR NO CONSCIOUS REASON, SHE FEELS HEART-STOPPING PANIC.
IVOR...


...LET'S GO HOME.
I'M NOT VERY HUNGRY AFTER ALL.
MS. IVY!
WAIT--WHAT--!
WHY--?
I WONDER WHAT STARTLED HER?
NO ONE'S HERE...AT LEAST...NO ONE'S HERE NOW...!
AND SO IT GOES.
HIS SHADOW IS EVERYWHERE SHE GOES.
AT A JEWELER'S IN MIDTOWN GOTHAM...AT A FLOWER SHOP IN SOHO...
SHE TRIES TO IGNORE HIM.
SHE TRIES VERY HARD
BUT EVERY MIND HAS ITS BREAKING POINT--
--AND BY SUNDOWN, IVY HAS FOUND HERS.
LEAVE ME ALONE!
LEAVE ME ALONE!

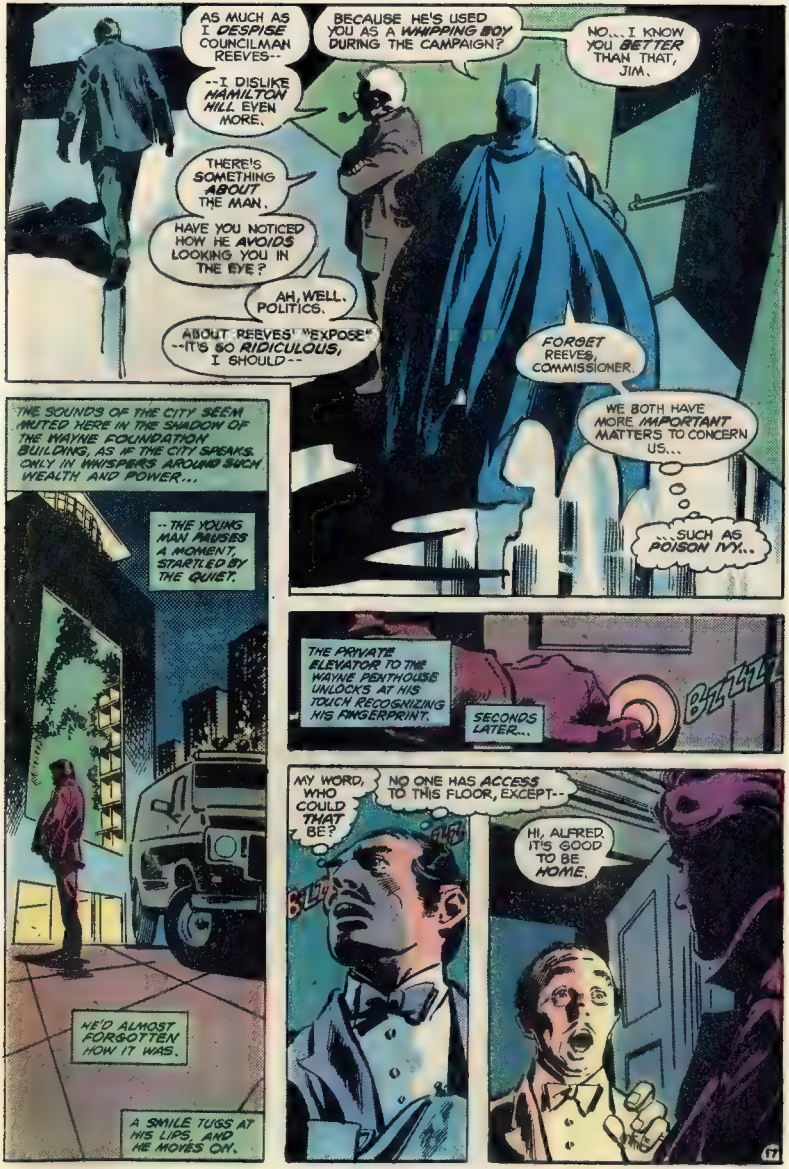
PAIN OUTWEIGHS THE ANGER IN HER CRY.
DESPERATION HAUNTS HER FACE LIKE THE MEMORY OF A GHOST.
HE WATCHES.
THIS TIME, HE DOES NOT SMILE.
CURSE HIM!
IT WAS PERFECT, AND HE'S RUINED IT!
I WANT TO KILL HIM!
OH, NO.
IVY, DON'T YOU THINK--
MY BEAUTIFUL HYBRIDS.
THE HYBRIDS. MY SPECIAL HYBRIDS... THEY'RE THE ANSWER, IVOR.
THAT'S HOW WE'LL KILL THE BATMAN...!
SHADOWS SURROUND BRUCE WAYNE, ARTIFICIAL SHADOWS CAST BY THE LOBBY LIGHTS OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING...
OUTSIDE IT IS NIGHT; HERE, A LYING DAYLIGHT REMAINS.
WAYNE WINCES UNDER THE LIGHTS; NIGHT BETTER SUITS HIS MOOD.
TAKE A LONG, LAST LOOK, BRUCE.
IF MY PLAN DOESN'T WORK, YOU'LL HAVE TO VACATE THIS PLACE BY TOMORROW.
AND IN A WAY, I WON'T BE SORRY-- EH?
SMILE FOR THE BIRDIE, HANDSOME MAN.
CLICK
AW, YOU BLINKED!
12

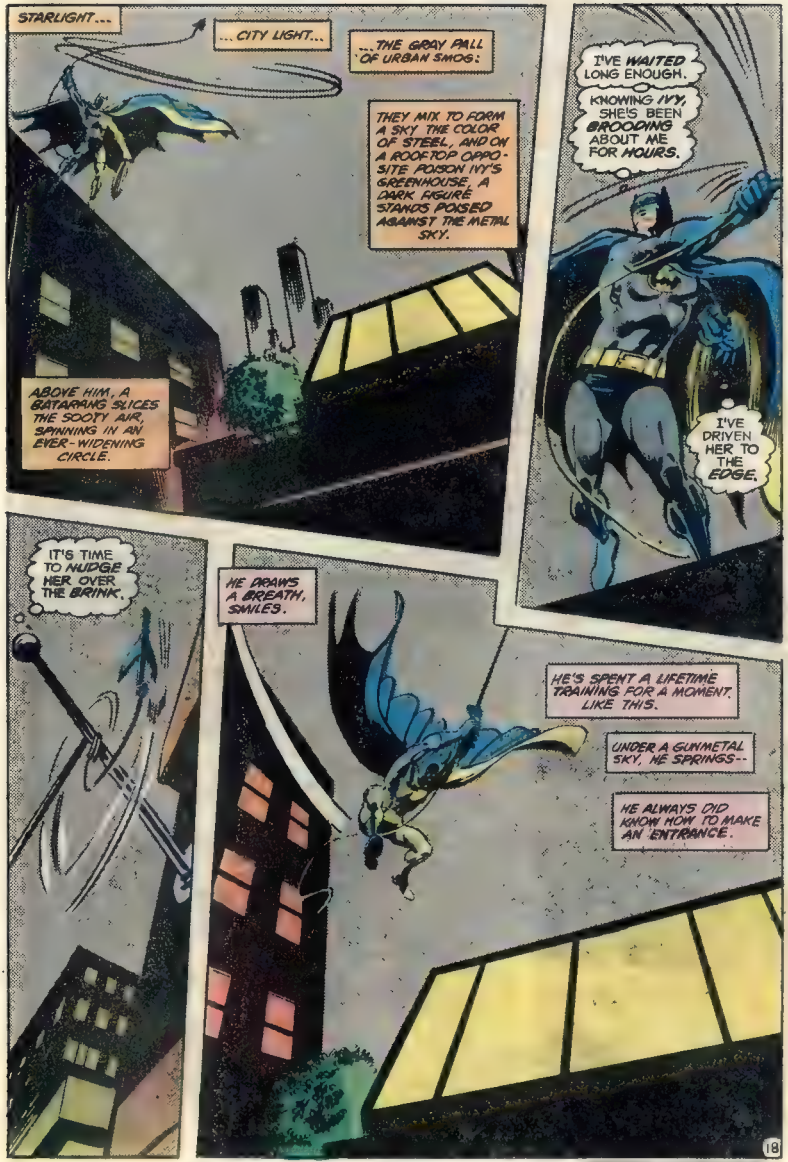

YOU SHOULD SEE YOUR FACE, BRUCE--
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST.
--AND YOU WILL, WHEN THAT FILM IS DEVELOPED!
WELL, MAYBE YOU HAVE.
IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN MY NAME, IT'S--
VICKI! VICKI VALE!
UM, NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT.
IT'S BEEN YEARS!*
YOU LEFT SO SUDDENLY-- I HEARD YOU WERE IN EUROPE--!
*SINCE DET. #330, IN FACT.- Dick
YOU HEARD RIGHT, DARLING.
I'VE BEEN PARIS BUREAU CHIEF FOR PICTURE NEWS MAGAZINE.
AND NOW YOU'RE BACK, VISITING?
PERMANENTLY!
VICKI VALE...WE WERE QUITE AN ITEM, ONCE.
IRONIC, VICKI RETURNING AT A TIME LIKE THIS...
LUCIUS--I HOPED YOU'D STILL BE HERE.
WE BETTER TALK.
WE'VE GOT A LOT TO TALK ABOUT, MR. WAYNE.
JANSEN CALLED, FROM GOTHAM NATIONAL--
SAY, I'VE COME AT A BAD TIME, HAVEN'T I?
BRUCE, LET'S HAVE LUNCH TOMORROW, WHEN THINGS HAVE CALMED DOWN.
THANKS, VICKI.
UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES--
I'M A BIG GIRL, BRUCE. I CAN HANDLE DISAPPOINTMENTS--
--THE BIG QUESTION IS, CAN YOU?
BRUCE WAYNE
LUCIUS FOX
MORE ON VICKI VALE IN THE PAGES OF DETECTIVE 511...

GOTHAM RIVER DRIVE, THIRTY MINUTES LATER:
RUSH HOUR IS LONG PAST, AND THE SIX LANES OF PRE-WAR HIGHWAY REACHING FROM THE BATTERY TO THE NORTH SHORE ARE MORE OR LESS DESERTED...
MORE OR LESS.
SAY WHAT?
WHO THAT DUDE IN THAT BIG OLD ROLLS THINK HE IS, PASSIN' MY SASSY SILVER SEVILLE?
GONNA TEACH HIM A LESSON!
REEVES IS ABOUT TO START HIS PRESS CONFERENCE AT CITY HALL!
TALKING WITH LUCIUS, I LOST TRACK OF THE TIME!
ANYWAY, IT'LL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO TRY OUT A NEW GADGET I'VE DEVELOPED--!
EH?
HEY, SUCKER-- EAT MY DUST!
OF ALL THE--THIS CHARACTER WANTS TO RACE ME!
HE'S ABOUT TO RECEIVE THE SHOCK OF HIS LIFE!
VVROOOMM
HUH?
THAT DON' SOUND LIKE NO ROLLS ENGINE.!
SO DARK IN THIS TUNNEL, CAN'T SEE-- BUT SOMETHIN' TELLS ME I BEEN--
VVROAARR
MAMA!
14

WHERE'D HE COME FROM?
SHOOT!
SKREEEEEE
IT'S GETTIN' SO THE ROAD AIN'T SAFE FOR NOBODY NO MORE.
NEXT TIME I TAKIN' THE BUS!
COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE, AT GOTHAM CITY HALL...
OLD FRIEND, I WON'T LIE TO YOU.
REEVES IS GOING TO COME DOWN HARD...
COMMISSIONER
... AND WITH THE MOOD THE ELECTORATE'S IN, HE MIGHT JUST RIDE YOUR CORPSE STRAIGHT INTO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE!
HE'S A DEMAGOGUE, BATMAN.
HE KNOWS HOW TO ROUSE THE DARKEST SIDE OF PEOPLE, HOW TO PLAY TO THEIR FEARS, THEIR SECRET HATREDS.
THINGS AREN'T THAT BAD, JIM.
I WORRY FOR YOU.
WELL, LET'S HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.
--POSITIVE PROOF, RIGHT HERE IN MY HAND!
VOTE REEVES
MY AIDES WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH COPIES OF THE PICTURES I'M HOLDING...

...SHOCKING EVIDENCE THAT GOTHAM'S MASKED "VIGILANTE" IS SECRETLY GOTHAM'S MOST VICIOUS CRIMINAL MASTERMIND!
FOR YEARS, HE'S TRICKED THE CITY'S POLICE--
--EVEN COMMISSIONER GORDON!
SEE FOR YOURSELVES:
THE BATMAN IS "BIG JACK" JOHNSON!
HOLY CATS, IT'S TRUE! WHAT A HEADLINE--
"BATMAN IS MOB BOSS, SAYS REEVES!"
THAT'S RIGHT, LOU! HOLD THE FRONT PAGE FOR COPY AND PHOTO!
I'M GRABBIN' A CAB--BE THERE IN SIX MINUTES!
--I DON'T CARE IF YOU ARE RUNNING "MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL!"
BREAK INTO THE BROADCAST! WE'VE GOT TO CARRY THIS LIVE!
--WHILE, ABOVE...
BATMAN!
THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE HERE. I JUST WANT TO SAY--
SAVE IT, BILL.
WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH FROM POLITICIANS TONIGHT.
I'M NOT TALKING TO YOU, GORDON.
BATMAN, I WANT YOU TO KNOW--I THINK MY OPPONENT'S ACTIONS ARE DESPICABLE.
CHEAP THEATRICALS. I'LL SAY GO TO THE PRESS.


AS MUCH AS I DESPISE COUNCILMAN REEVES--
--I DISLIKE HAMILTON HILL EVEN MORE.
BECAUSE HE'S USED YOU AS A WHIPPING BOY DURING THE CAMPAIGN?
NO... I KNOW YOU BETTER THAN THAT, JIM.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE MAN.
HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW HE AVOIDS LOOKING YOU IN THE EYE?
AH, WELL. POLITICS.
ABOUT REEVES' "EXPOSE" --IT'S SO RIDICULOUS, I SHOULD--
FORGET REEVES, COMMISSIONER.
WE BOTH HAVE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS TO CONCERN US...
...SUCH AS POISON IVY...
THE SOUNDS OF THE CITY SEEM MUTED HERE IN THE SHADOW OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING, AS IF THE CITY SPEAKS ONLY IN WHISPERS AROUND SUCH WEALTH AND POWER...
--THE YOUNG MAN PAUSES A MOMENT, STARTLED BY THE QUIET.
WE'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN HOW IT WAS.
A SMILE TUGS AT HIS LIPS, AND HE MOVES ON.
THE PRIVATE ELEVATOR TO THE WAYNE PENTHOUSE UNLOCKS AT HIS TOUCH RECOGNIZING HIS FINGERPRINT.
SECONDS LATER...
BLLLZ
MY WORD, WHO COULD THAT BE?
NO ONE HAS ACCESS TO THIS FLOOR, EXCEPT--
BLLZ
HI, ALFRED. IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME.
17


STARLIGHT...
...CITY LIGHT...
...THE GRAY PALL OF URBAN SMOG:
THEY MIX TO FORM A SKY THE COLOR OF STEEL, AND ON A ROOFTOP OPPOSITE POISON IVY'S GREENHOUSE, A DARK FIGURE STANDS POSED AGAINST THE METAL SKY.
ABOVE HIM, A BATARANG SLICES THE SOOTY AIR, SPINNING IN AN EVER-WIDENING CIRCLE.
I'VE WAITED LONG ENOUGH.
KNOWING IVY, SHE'S BEEN BROODING ABOUT ME FOR HOURS.
I'VE DRIVEN HER TO THE EDGE.
IT'S TIME TO NUDGE HER OVER THE BRINK.
HE DRAWS A BREATH, SMILES.
HE'S SPENT A LIFETIME TRAINING FOR A MOMENT LIKE THIS.
UNDER A GUNMETAL SKY, HE SPRINGS--
HE ALWAYS DID KNOW HOW TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE.

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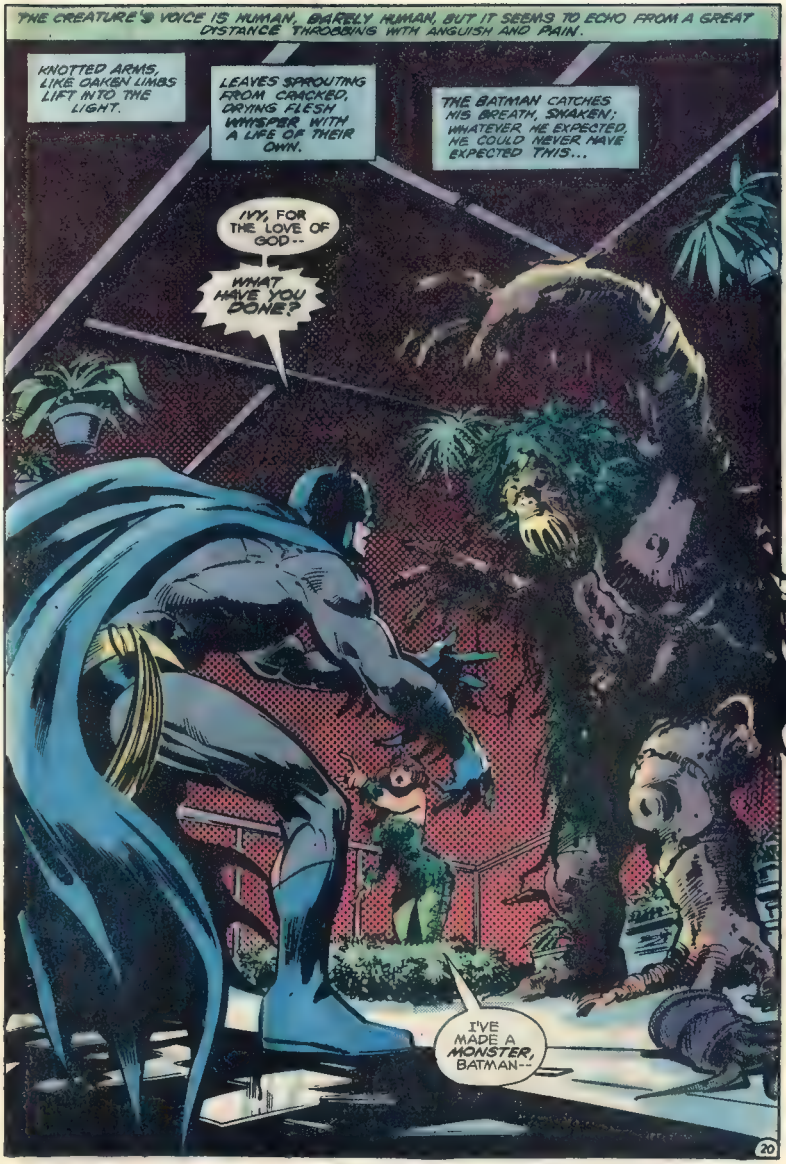
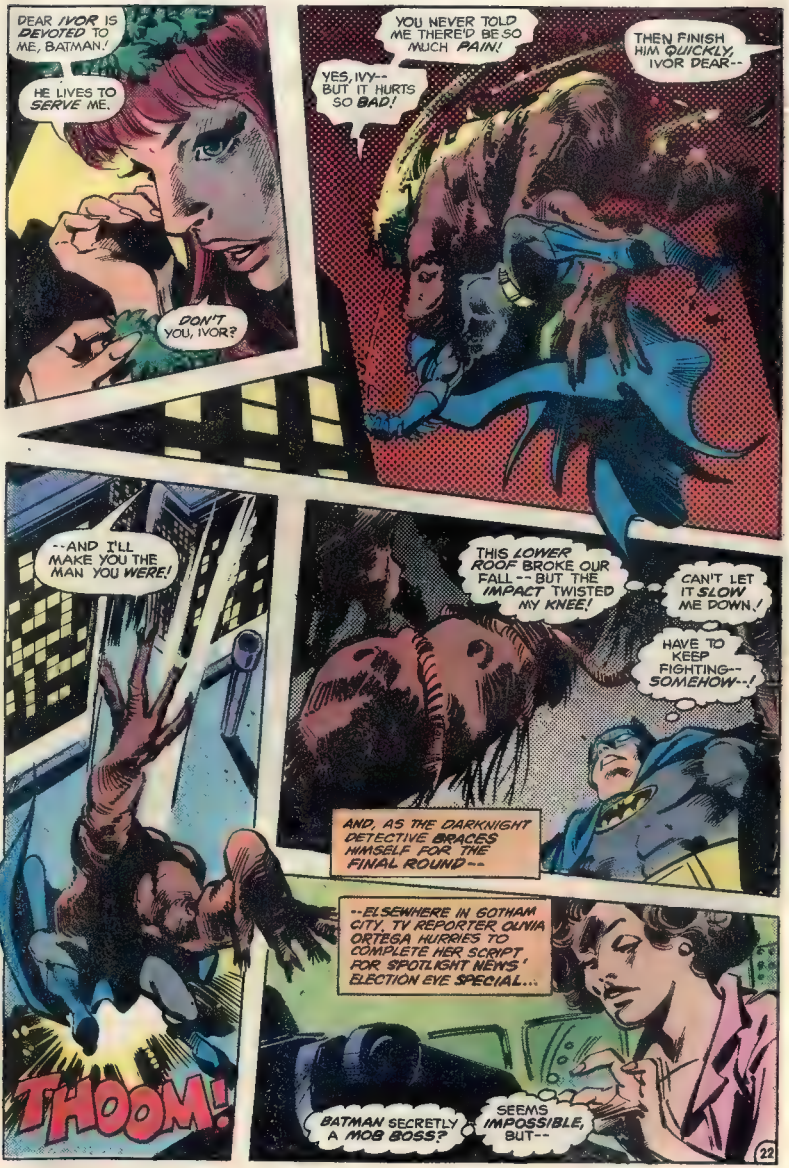
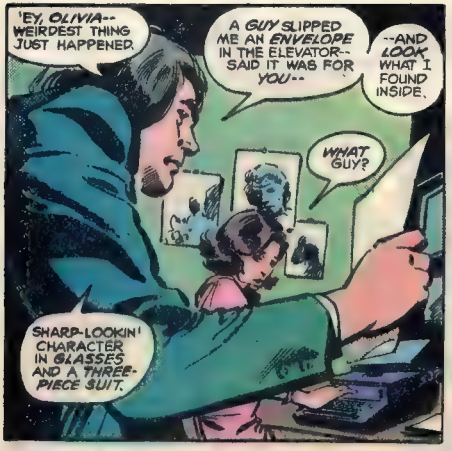
I WONDERED WHEN YOU'D SHOW UP.
IF YOU'D COME ANY EARLIER, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN READY.
CRASH!
BUT YOU'VE ARRIVED--JUST IN TIME!
YOU REMEMBER IVOR, DON'T YOU?
IVOR, MY CHAUFFEUR?
WE'VE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH MY SPECIAL HYBRIDS, IVOR AND I--!
DARLING, COME HERE!
Y-YES, MISTRESS...
SOMETHING MAKES A SOUND LIKE TREE LIMBS CREAKING AND DRY LEAVES RUSTLING IN A MIDNIGHT WIND...
SOMETHING SHAMBLES OUT OF THE DARK...
... AND WINCES, IN THE LIGHT...
MISTRESS, IT H-HURTS...


THE CREATURE'S VOICE IS HUMAN, BARELY HUMAN, BUT IT SEEMS TO ECHO FROM A GREAT DISTANCE THROBBING WITH ANGUISH AND PAIN.
KNOTTED ARMS, LIKE OAKEN LIMBS LIFT INTO THE LIGHT.
LEAVES SPROUTING FROM CRACKED, DRYING FLESH WHISPER WITH A LIFE OF THEIR OWN.
THE BATMAN CATCHES HIS BREATH, SHAKEN; WHATEVER HE EXPECTED, HE COULD NEVER HAVE EXPECTED THIS...
IVY, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD--
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
I'VE MADE A MONSTER, BATMAN--

--THE BETTER TO KILL YOU!
AARRGH
LIFTING ME-- AS LIGHTLY AS A CHILD WITH A BROKEN DOLL!
BETTER BRACE MYSELF! HE'S GOIN' TO--
UNNH!
SMASH
GLAD I KEPT MY BATROPE LOOSE!
I WANTED TO PSYCH POISON IVY INTO DOING SOMETHING RECKLESS--
--SOMETHING THAT MIGHT REVEAL HOW SHE MANIPULATED THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BOARD--
KWHAM
--BUT I NEVER PLANNED FOR SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
WHAT SHE'S DONE TO THIS MAN IS MONSTROUS!


DEAR IVOR IS DEVOTED TO ME, BATMAN!
HE LIVES TO SERVE ME.
DON'T YOU, IVOR?
YOU NEVER TOLD ME THERE'D BE SO MUCH PAIN!
YES, IVY-- BUT IT HURTS SO BAD!
THEN FINISH HIM QUICKLY, IVOR DEAR--
--AND I'LL MAKE YOU THE MAN YOU WERE!
THOOM!
THIS LOWER ROOF BROKE OUR FALL -- BUT THE IMPACT TWISTED MY KNEE!
CAN'T LET IT SLOW ME DOWN.!
HAVE TO KEEP FIGHTING-- SOMEHOW--!
AND, AS THE DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE BRACES HIMSELF FOR THE FINAL ROUND--
--ELSEWHERE IN GOTHAM CITY, TV REPORTER OLIVIA ORTEGA HURRIES TO COMPLETE HER SCRIPT FOR SPOTLIGHT NEWS' ELECTION EVE SPECIAL...
BATMAN SECRETLY A MOB BOSS?
SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT--


'EY, OLIVIA-- WEIRDEST THING JUST HAPPENED.
A GUY SLIPPED ME AN ENVELOPE IN THE ELEVATOR-- SAID IT WAS FOR YOU--
--AND LOOK WHAT I FOUND INSIDE.
WHAT GUY?
SHARP-LOOKIN' CHARACTER IN GLASSES AND A THREE-PIECE SUIT.

MEAN-WHILE...
I'M CORNERED--
--AND WITH MY KNEE READY TO GIVE WAY ANY SECOND--
--I CAN'T KEEP DODGING!
IF HE CATCHES ME, HE'LL CRUSH ME.
ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO TRY--

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

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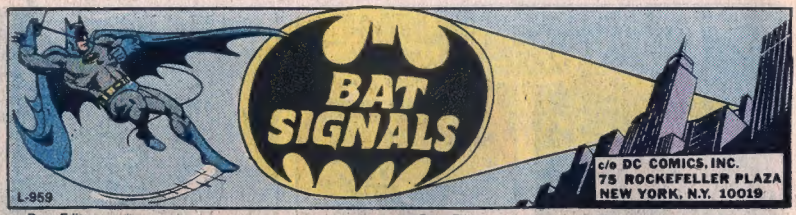
--A DIRECT ATTACK!
THIS CHIMNEY PIPE IS RUSTED THROUGH AT ITS BASE.
THERE! IT'S BREAKING LOOSE--!
A CREAK, A SNAP--AND THE WEAKENED METAL TEARS FREE--
KWHAM!
--NOT A SECOND TOO SOON!
IVOR'S DOWN!
THE FOOL MISSED HIS CHANCE--
HE'S USELESS TO ME NOW!
THESE POISON THORNS WILL RID ME OF HIM AND THE BATMAN BOTH--
FWIT
FWIT
FWIT
IVY, YOU'RE A REAL SWEETHEART!
EEEEEEEEEE
ROBIN.
IT'S ROBIN--!
FOR JUST AN INSTANT, HE FORGETS HIS DANGER.
BUT AN INSTANT IS ENOUGH.--
AARRRH

IVOR, LISTEN TO ME--YOU'VE BEEN USED!
IVY DOESN'T CARE--ABOUT YOU--NEVER HAS--!
I LIVE--TO SERVE HER!
AND SHE'S REPAID YOU--BY MAKING YOU A MONSTER!
MISTRESS...?
THE CREATURE HESITATES.
THE BATMAN DOES NOT.
IVY!
IT'S OVER, LADY.
YOUR PAL'S TAKEN A FALL--
--AND NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.
BLAST YOU!
YOU'LL NEVER PROVE A THING!
ABOUT WHAT?
I'M JUST HERE TO HELP A FRIEND...
SHORTLY...
THE PARAMEDICS ARE COMING, BATMAN.
HAVE THEM CHECK THAT KNEE YOU'RE FAVORING--
I'LL BE FINE, COMMISSIONER.
I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT IVOR...
YOU CARE... EVEN AFTER I TRIED... KILL YOU...?

YOU AREN'T THE ONLY MAN WHO EVER FELL UNDER IVY'S SPELL, IVOR.
YES... WAYNE... HIS BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
SHE... HYPNOTIZED THEM... TRICKED THEM...
TELL ME MORE, IVOR. I'M FASCINATED.
AND BY THE TIME THE PARAMEDICS HAVE LOADED HIM ABOARD AN AMBULANCE, IVOR HAS TOLD ALL....
A NEAT PLAN, IVY.
IT ALMOST WORKED --TILL YOU LOST YOUR NERVE!
BATMAN! YOU DID THIS!
YOU RUINED ME--
SNAP
--RUINED ME--!
I'D SAY YOU RUINED YOURSELF--
THE BATMAN ONLY HELPED THINGS ALONG.
EH? WHERE--?
BLAST, HE'S DONE IT AGAIN!
EPILOGUE:
-- SO ALFRED TOLD ME YOU'D BEEN ACTING STRANGE LATELY.
WHEN I CHECKED WITH LUCIUS FOX, AND HE EXPLAINED IVY'S TAKEOVER OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION ASSETS --
--FIGURING OUT THE REST WASN'T HARD.
I GUESSED YOU'D BE AT IVY'S PLACE.
AS IT TURNED OUT--IT LOOKS LIKE I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME.
ARE YOU HOME FOR GOOD NOW, DICK?

COULD BE.
I LEARNED A LOT THESE PAST FEW MONTHS ON THE ROAD.
MOSTLY, I LEARNED HOW MUCH I NEED YOUR FRIENDSHIP.
WE'RE A TEAM, BATMAN.
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FUTURE--
--THAT'S SOMETHING I WON'T EVER FORGET AGAIN.
MASTER BRUCE, YOUNG MR. GRAYSON, COME QUICKLY--
--THE TELEVISION--!
"--JUST THREE HOURS AGO, COUNCILMAN REEVES STUNNED THE GOTHAM PRESS WITH A SHOCKING REVELATION."
"HIS ACCUSATION--THAT THE BATMAN IS IN REALITY MOB FIGURE 'BIG JACK' JOHNSON."
"BUT, AS THIS UNDOCTORED PHOTOGRAPH, DELIVERED ANONYMOUSLY TO MY OFFICE ONLY THIRTY MINUTES AGO, PROVES--"
"--COUNCILMAN REEVES' OWN PICTURES ARE A FRAUD."
"HIS PICTURES HAVE BEEN CLEVERLY FAKED--FOR NO OTHER PURPOSE THAN TO DESTROY THE BATMAN'S REPUTATION FOR POLITICAL GAIN."
OLIVIA'S ORTEGA'S BROADCAST GETS THE HIGHEST VIEWER RATING IN GOTHAM'S HISTORY, THIS ELECTION EVE.
HER WORDS REACH MILLIONS...
...WRITING COUNCILMAN'S ARTHUR REEVES' POLITICAL EPITAPH.
AND IN ONE HOME, AT LEAST, THEY ARE GREETED WITH SIGHS OF RELIEF, AND NOT A LITTLE LAUGHTER...
IS IT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW, DANGEROUS CHAPTER IN THE LEGEND OF THE BATMAN? FOR ANSWERS, SEE DETECTIVE #511, ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS...
NEXT!
"THE MURDEROUS PRESCRIPTIONS OF DOCTOR DEATH"!



Dear Editor,

BATMAN #339 held a special significance for me since it featured Poison Ivy; the first issue of BATMAN I ever bought was #181, where the Pernicious Plant-mistress made her bow. Perhaps this factor colored my opinion of "A Sweet Kiss of Poison...", but I think not. Rather, I think it was an original idea, tight scripting and (fairly) close attention to detail which captivated my interest. My one quibble is with Ivy's reluctance to do murder; when she went up against Wonder Woman in WORLD'S FINEST #s 251 and 252 (a story *also* scripted by Gerry Conway), she committed murder right and left! Gerry should pay closer attention to his own work.

This incongruity notwithstanding, the story was dynamite. Poison Ivy has won—for now. In seeking to purloin Bruce Wayne's wealth, she has inadvertently stymied The Batman as well. This dilemma is all the more delicious because the villainess retreated just when victory was at hand, leaving The Caped Crusader and his zillions of readers wondering just when she'll return to claim her booty. A marvelous "hook" to lure us back for the inevitable rematch. But when? BUT WHEN??

Scott Gibson, 2711 S. Pinehurst Dr., Evergreen, CO 80439

Several other correspondents pointed out the incongruity in Ivy's statement. Most vocal were Alfred Bouteiller, Neil Ahlquist and Charles David Haskell. Obviously, they need to be told that Ivy is a many-faceted individual. She is cruel, kind, grasping, giving, petty, expansive, calculating and...a vicious liar!

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Could you help me with a little problem? I've a bet with my friend Kathy: We're wondering who created Poison Ivy. I think it was Gerry Conway, but Kathy insists it was Michael Fleisher. Please tell me who is right.

Roger Fleming, Lubbock, TX

You missed out by choosing Gerry, Roger. At the time of Ivy's first story, Gerry Conway had yet to begin his illustrious career with us. In fact, he was still about one year away from turning in those first scripts to Joe Orlando. And Kathy, you were also off the mark with your guess. Michael came to work for us a good six years after the debut of Poison Ivy. Michael, too, developed under the tutelage of Joe Orlando and carved a successful career for himself as John Albano's replacement on Jonah Hex.

The first Ivy episode was printed in BATMAN #181 June 1966. Entitled "Beware of—Poison Ivy" that immortal tale was written by the same fellow who created Black Canary, Rose and the Thorn, Angel and the Ape, Harlequin, Lady Cop, Mile Marie, Star Sapphire and a score of other immortal characters. Right you are! Robert Kanigher!

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Just a line to let you know how very much I am enjoying your book. You're still pleasing this reader of 17 years. Thanks,

Bill Weston, address withheld by request

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Warning! If you intend to continue producing issues like #339 (my first issue) you have made a long-time reader out of me.

Henry Jeffers, 1263 Benton, Redding, WA

We'll be doing our darndest to keep both old readers and new happy!

Dear Editor,

Seeing as how #339's lead feature was the first part of a multi-parter (which are often hard to comment on, since so many start off with a great concept and then run it into the ground, and sometimes the reverse—work out the metaphor for yourself) and since the backup story was so good, I'll concentrate on Robin's adventure this time out.

Clearly, what Gerry Conway was trying to do with "Yesterday's Heroes" was give us at least a partial psychological portrait of Dick Grayson. This is long overdue. In recent years the common wisdom has been to write off Robin as an irrelevant boy sidekick. Before that, as Batman's junior partner he was used mostly for comic relief, as someone for Batman to talk to, and as someone to get into trouble so Batman could do his stuff. Recently, some writers have wanted to give Robin a more substantial character, but they have tended to follow one of two paths: Either they emphasized his similarities to Batman (ie. as a younger, if now independent, version of Batman) or they emphasized his differences to Batman (as Marv Wolfman tends to in Teen Titans). In eight pages Gerry Conway has reconciled these two approaches and synthesized them into a realistic and rather endearing character for Dick Grayson.

At first, I thought that this story would have trouble being fitted in with Robin's portrayal in the Teen Titans' mag. At a superficial level, Gerry seemed to be saying that Dick wanted not to be Robin, but to be Dick Grayson. But on second glance it's apparent that he doesn't want to be "just" Robin. Now that he has integrated his conflicting sides, perhaps he can go back to being Robin with ease, but a confident Robin.

As an aside, I'll mention that for some reason I haven't worked out yet, Conway is best working with shorter story lengths. (I don't know what use you can make of this "information", but there you are.) The reconciling of Robin's opposing sides may be obvious, but Conway was the one who actually did it.

Yours truly, "T.M. Maple"

Thanks for noticing, "T.M." One of the things we set out to accomplish upon taking over the editorial reins of the Batman titles was to redefine the character of Robin/Dick Grayson and his relationship to Batman/Bruce Wayne. "Yesterday's Heroes" was the first, major step along the road to that goal. We hope you'll notice (and appreciate) other new directions and changes forthcoming. Having you care makes it all worthwhile. Truly. Thank you. Happy Thanksgiving, and good afternoon.

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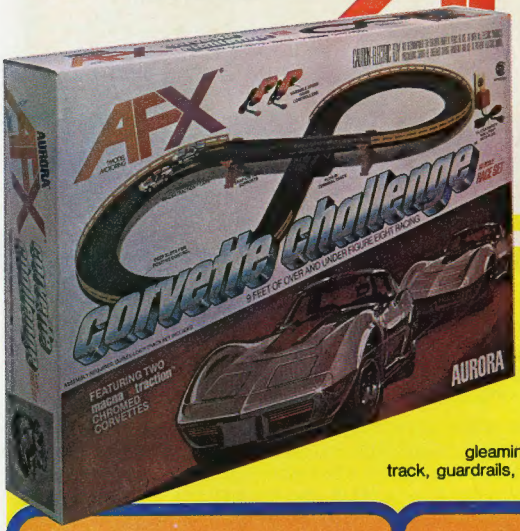

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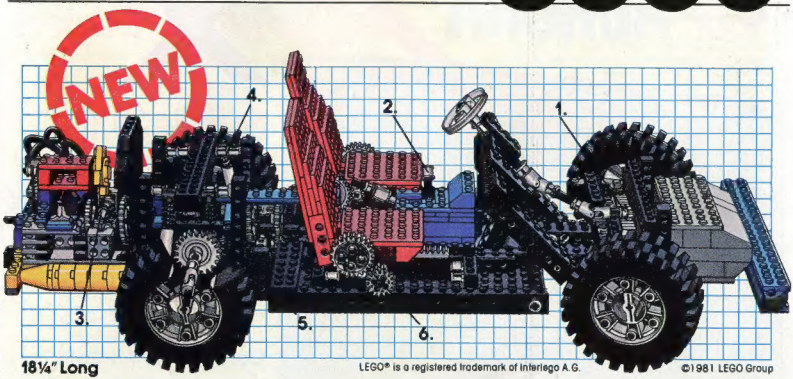

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